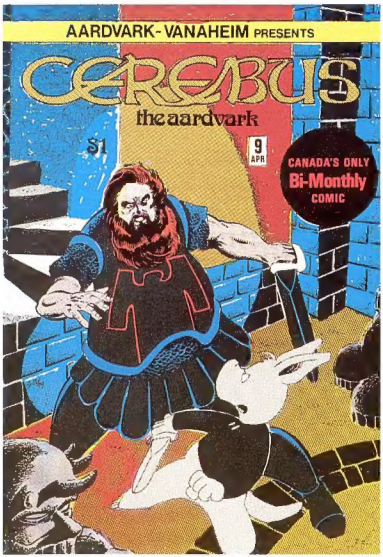
ISSN 0712-7774

$1.25 USA • $1.50 CANADA • 70p UK

CEREBUS

bi-weekly



reprinting Cerebus number nine (1979) in its entirety

March 24, 1989

CEREBUS
bi-weekly
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CIRCULATION
19,000

DAVE SIM
President

JOYCE HARRISON
Interim Administrator

published by Aardvark-Vanaheim, Box 1674, Stn. C., Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4R2

The inside front cover of Cerebus 1 to 70 featured a 'Note from the Publisher' written by Deni Loubert. Dave Sim and Deni Loubert were married from October 6, 1978 to August 20, 1983. Deni Loubert currently resides in Long Beach, California and is the owner and publisher of Renegade Press, 2705 East 7th St., Long Beach, CA., 90804.

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

This issue has been quite an experience for me. Not only have I enjoyed watching the story develop (and **that** was very much like watching someone in labour), but I actually helped in the production. Nothing fancy, just filled in large black spaces and put all the tone on. But as I never did anything like this before, it was quite an experience!!

You will probably notice that the story has a lot of twists and turns to the plot and an ending you'll never expect. (And don't sneak a look, it could take some of the fun out of the story!!)

As for the letters page ..... HMPH!!!!! ..... !!!!!! I think Cerebus says it all. Really, my little feelings are hurt!!! You're taking all the joy out of checking our morning mail. But enough said - I can tell when I'm not liked. You can **at least** read this story. But then, you didn't buy this for the editorial, did you?

Hey, I love you all, anyways (notice a few feelings of guilt for saying such nasty things to you?) But really, I do (even if you don't write).

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1979 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 no. 9, April 1979 - May 1979.

Printed in Canada by Preney Print & Litho, Windsor, Ontario

CEREBUS
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March 24, 1989

The introduction below was written for **Swords of Cerebus**, six volumes of which were published reprinting Cerebus 1 to 25. It was written in 1981.

CEREBUS No. 9 (April - May, 1979)

This issue looks quite a bit different than any of the previous ones -- I don't know if it's as obvious to other people as it is to me (an occupational hazard of being the person who drew it, I've come to realize). There is a very stark quality to the black areas that didn't show up before.

I wish I could say that it was a conscious move on my part to a more graphic and less scratchy style of drawing, but alas, such is not the case. This issue was an experiment in sharing my work-load around to cut down on my drawing time dramatically.

My mouth absolutely begins to water whenever I think of something that might cut down on my drawing time dramatically. And in this case, coincidentally enough, the idea came from Gene Day. Gene around this time had hired his brother Dan to fill in his solid blacks, as well as adding the occasional texture lines, assisting on laying down the tone, erasing inked pages and just generally cutting down on his drawing time dramatically.

I didn't have a brother handy.

But I did have a wife.

Deni liked the idea a whole bunch, since she had wanted from the day I met her to help me out in any way she possibly could (bless her heart). I set to work on the first few pages, pencilling, lettering and then inking in outlines, marking little "x's" on the areas needing solid black and then turning them over to Deni who was also going to lay in the tone as specified.

It was a real vacation.

For a few days.

When the first few pages were done, I was not overly pleased with the way that they looked. I hemmed and hawed and did everything short of accusing Deni of redrawing the stuff behind my back. Being a patient sort, however, I decided that it was strictly a matter of getting used to the style of working and learning how to compensate for what little defects cropped up from time to time.

Things didn't improve.

I was at a complete loss to explain why things worked out better when I did the whole page myself and just didn't look right when someone else filled in the blacks. I mean black is black right? I considered diluting the ink that Deni was using in an attempt to soften the super-stark look before me.

It came as quite a blow when I finally realized what was wrong. I'm a "fixer".

All the way through the inking stage of drawing, I'm adding a little black here, a little black there. Cutting into black areas with white paint, then putting most of it back. Thickening lines and adding texture, putting tone on for a quick look, then stripping it off again and trying something else.

Whatever dreams I may have had of someday owning a studio full of people blacking in areas and pasting in tone were dashed in one moment of realization.

I was on my own.

Looking back on the issue to write this introduction, I am not quite as disheartened by the results. Considering that Deni practically drew the energy globes sequence single-handedly (I went in after and did the white spatter effects) looking at the ratio of black to white on the page, the sequence did not look that much different from what I would have done on my own. But the spotting of blacks on the other pages just could not be accomplished in outline to my satisfaction. It is perhaps worthy of note that Kim Thompson in his review of Cerebus in the Comics Journal found the "marble patterns in the scene with the Panrovian coarse and distracting". I can remember curdling a bit when I saw that page, ashamed to admit that the tonal pattern I had selected did not work at all. Added to my reluctance to ask Deni to pull up all of her hard work and replace it, the whole situation made for a very uncomfortable few weeks.

Moving away from the technical side to the content, you can tell that I very quickly became uncomfortable with Cerebus as Ruler. Here he was with an army of devoted followers and I couldn't wait to ditch them and get him off on his own. I anguished over the decision of how to handle this for some time, aware that the avid Cerebus readers were going to need a plausible explanation of his vacillating approach to leadership. The most obvious quality in his character to latch onto was his competence, combined with his impatience with incompetence. Clearly, he did not have the qualities needed in a leader. It was not quite enough, however, to have him just leave his troops behind and never go back to them. That was when I developed the ending sequence to the story. Cerebus' sudden appreciation of his position and his sudden enthusiasm for an alliance of his own making brings the reader into complete harmony with the story direction.

Cerebus No. 9 (cont'd)

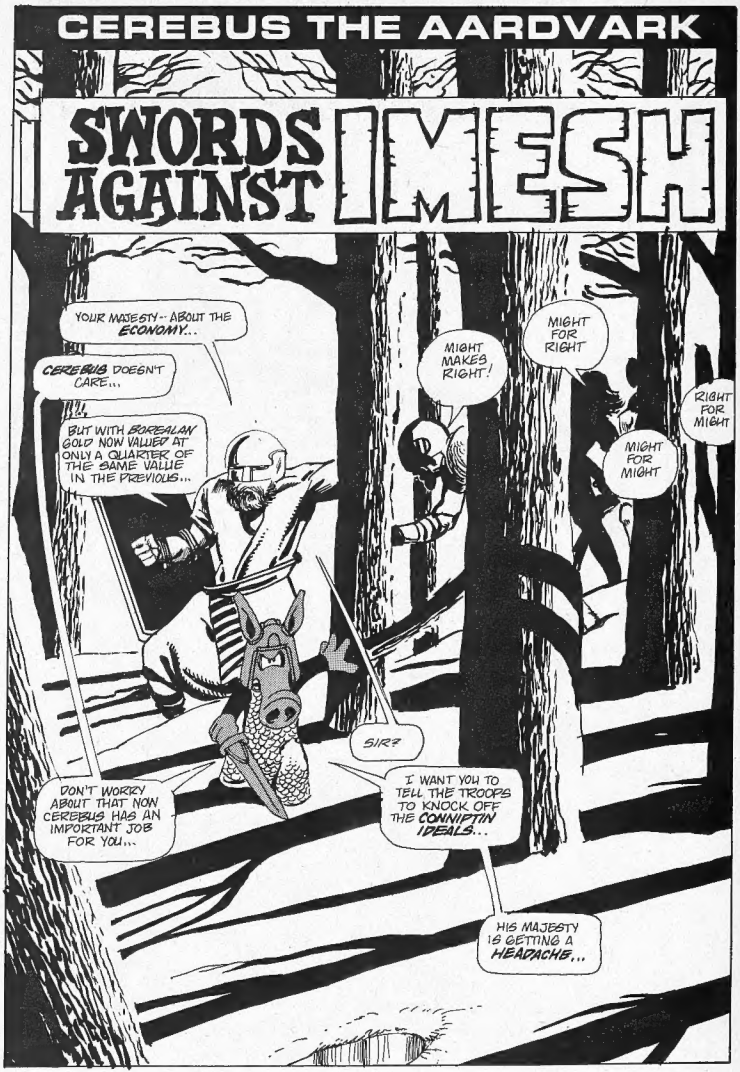
Whatever reservations the reader might have had about the lone wolf being co-opted into a pack are swept aside by the sudden elation of imminent victory and snow-balling success. It was with a great deal of satisfaction that I took Cerebus and the readers on a roller coaster ride of hope for his future and then drew the tracks straight into a brick wall.

For those of you interested in background, Iuesh is the city of Cerebus' adolescent years, the place where he studied magic under Magus Doran and first learned how to drink, gamble and raise hell. You can see from the size of the city why it was that Cerebus felt conquest to be a matter of troop strength and dedication to the cause. These northern "cities" are little more than military outposts surrounded by a single wall. Regularly sacked by barbarians or captured in the occasional border raid by a neighbouring tribe. Although this activity is not as wide-spread in the 'Aardvarkian Age" as it was in the previous hundred years or so (largely attributable to it being bad for business, and hence frowned on by the emerging merchant class), it is virtually unheard of in the capital cities (like Iest, Beduin, Palnu, etc.) which have remained safe and sound for many years.

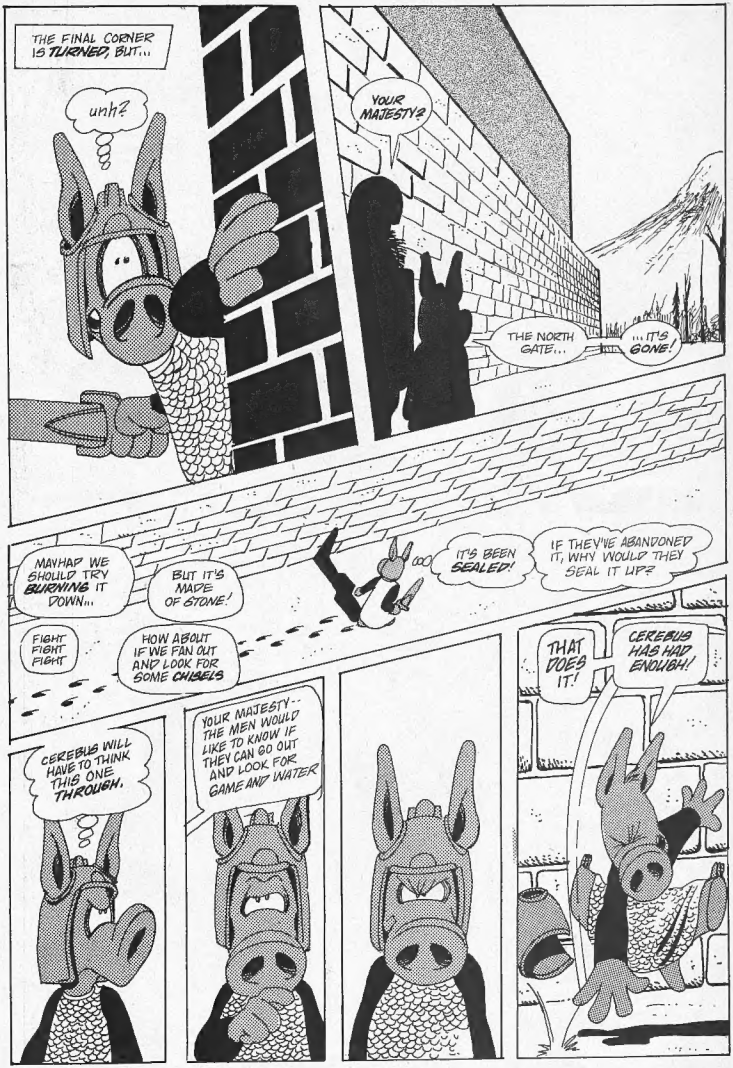
The story was also a study in the corrupting influence of power, since (as someone once said) power is not manifest unless it is power **over** some one. Even though my personal feelings about characters like K'oor border on complete revulsion, I still tried to build a certain amount of sympathy for his position and attitudes. Even Ronald Reagen likes puppies, right?

The major point of interest, for me though, was Cerebus' insidious seduction into the game of power itself and its bringing of him to the saddest of all possible points; where there was something to lose.

His first hard lesson in a long string to come.


CEREBUS THE AARDVARK
SWORDS AGAINST IMESH
YOUR MAJESTY-- ABOUT THE ECONOMY...
CEREBUS DOESN'T CARE...
BUT WITH BARSALAN GOLD NOW VALUED AT ONLY A QUARTER OF THE SAME VALUE IN THE PREVIOUS...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW CEREBUS HAS AN IMPORTANT JOB FOR YOU...
SIR?
I WANT YOU TO TELL THE TROOPS TO KNOCK OFF THE CONNIPTIN IDEALS...
HIS MAJESTY IS GETTING A HEADACHE...
MIGHT MAKES RIGHT!
MIGHT FOR RIGHT
RIGHT FOR MIGHT
MIGHT FOR MIGHT

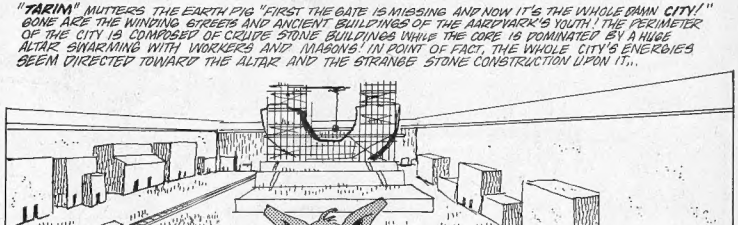
SO MANY YEARS SINCE WE HAD SEEN IMESH...THOUGH NONE HAD EVER TAKEN THE CITY FROM THE REAR, CEREBUS BELIEVED IT POSSIBLE...
THE HOIFAN HAVEN'T POSTED SENTRIES ON THE SOUTH WALL IN YEARS...
WE'LL MAKE OUR WAY AROUND TO THE GATE! STAY CLOSE TO THE WALL AND THEY SHOULDN'T SEE US.
AND IF THEY DO?
IF THEY DO, YOU CAN STOP WORRYING ABOUT THE VALUE OF BOREALAN GOLD AND START WORRYING ABOUT YOUR NECK...
THE GATE IS THE SOFT UNDER-BELLY OF IMESH! IF WE CAN SURPRISE THE GUARDS AND GET INSIDE...
NAUGHT WILL STAND IN OUR WAY, SAVE UNARMED CITIZENS OF THE CITY...
EVEN AS HE SPEAKS, CEREBUS WONDERS IF IT IS POSSIBLE, WITH HAND-PICKED TROOPS PERHAPS...
BUT THE CONNIPTINS LACK WAR MACHINES, BOWMEN, PIKEMEN -- TO LAY SIEGE TO EVEN A RAVAGED CITY LIKE IMESH WITH CUT-AND-THRUST SWORDS SEEMS THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY...
JUST WHAT CEREBUS ALWAYS WANTED -- TO DIE AS REIGNING KING OF THE CHEERLEADERS
MIGHT FOR MIGHT
RIGHT FOR MIGHT
RIGHT FOR RIGHT
FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT
TIGHT AGAINST THE EAST WALL, THE CONNIPTIN FORCES SURGE FORWARD
RIGHT FOR MIGHT
MIGHT FOR MIGHT
HEY-- WATCH WHO YOU'RE SHOVING
SHHH
CEREBUS SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN A SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AS THE FIRST CONQUEST!


THE FINAL CORNER IS TURNED, BUT...
unh?
YOUR MAJESTY?
THE NORTH GATE...
... IT'S GONE!
MAYHAP WE SHOULD TRY BURNING IT DOWN...
BUT IT'S MADE OF STONE!
IT'S BEEN SEALED!
IF THEY'VE ABANDONED IT, WHY WOULD THEY SEAL IT UP?
FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT
HOW ABOUT IF WE FAN OUT AND LOOK FOR SOME CHISELS
CEREBUS WILL HAVE TO THINK THIS ONE THROUGH.
YOUR MAJESTY.. THE MEN WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF THEY CAN GO OUT AND LOOK FOR GAME AND WATER
THAT DOES IT!
CEREBUS HAS HAD ENOUGH!

WAP
HERE!-- YOU WEAR THAT CAST-IRON NIGHT-SHIRT FOR A FEW HOURS...
BUT, YOUR MAJESTY-- SURELY...
AAAG!
OUT OF MY WAY, BISON BREATH!
THE WHOLE LOT OF YOU CAN FORAGE FOR GAME AND WATER -- OR UNICORNS AND FAIRY DUST IF YOU WISH...
MEANWHILE, CEREBUS WILL SHOW YOU HOW A TRUE WARRIOR TAKES A CITY...
YOUR MAJESTY!
THE CONNIPTINS ALWAYS FOLLOW THEIR KING!
STOP!
IF THERE ARE ANY CAPABLE OF FOLLOWING CEREBUS...
...THEY ARE WELCOME TO DO SO!

CEREBUS WONDERS IF THAT OLD TOAD, GARSK, IS STILL CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS
TARIM! I'VE A FEW OLD SCORES TO SETTLE WITH HIM...
HMM! NO GUARDS ON THE WALL ANYWAY! FIRST, CEREBUS WILL HAVE TO FIND SOME TALKATIVE CITIZEN TO WAYLAY...
ONCE I HAVE AN IDEA OF THE TROOP STRENGTH, CEREBUS CAN DECIDE HOW BEST TO TAKE...
unh?

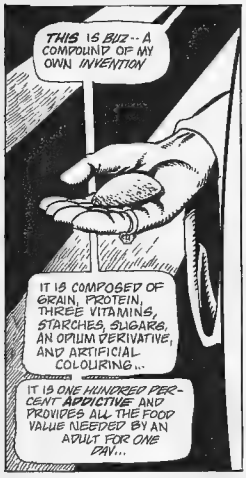
"TARIM" MUTTERS THE EARTH PIG "FIRST THE GATE IS MISSING AND NOW IT'S THE WHOLE DAMN CITY!" GONE ARE THE WINDING STREETS AND ANCIENT BUILDINGS OF THE AARDVARK'S YOUTH! THE PERIMETER OF THE CITY IS COMPOSED OF CRUDE STONE BUILDINGS WHILE THE CORE IS DOMINATED BY A HUGE ALTAR SWARMING WITH WORKERS AND MASONS! IN POINT OF FACT, THE WHOLE CITY'S ENERGIES SEEM DIRECTED TOWARD THE ALTAR AND THE STRANGE STONE CONSTRUCTION UPON IT...



THEY MUST ALL BE INSANE!
NONE BUT MADMEN WOULD TEAR DOWN THE RAM AND PEACOCK TAVERN...
WELL-- CEREBUS IS HERE TO CONQUER IMESH-- NOT TO MOURN THE PASSING OF ITS HISTORIC LANDMARKS...
EVEN SO...
CEREBUS WOULD HAVE GIVEN MUCH TO SEE WHAT SURFACED WHEN THEY DEMOLISHED THE RED CRESCENT QUARTER
CLOVIS! INSTEP! THEY'RE ALL CARRYING STONES! EVERYONE IN THE WHOLE CITY IS BUILDING THAT.... THAT...
TO HELL WITH TROOP STRENGTH-- THE FIRST THING CEREBUS HAS TO FIND OUT IS WHAT THESE IDIOTS ARE BUILDING!

AHA! A LIKELY-LOOKING STRAGGLER FOR CEREBUS TO BROW-BEAT...
THESE IMESHITES ARE SCRAWNY, BUT SEEM TO MAKE UP FOR IT WITH THEIR SPEED...
I AM CEREBUS THE AARDVARK--- I WOULD HAVE INFORMATION FROM...
I'M LATE!
NO TIME! NO TIME!
IF CEREBUS BELIEVED THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED HE'D BRAG THAT SKINNY FOOL AND BREAK HIS...
:PSSST:
SEDRA HAS THE INFORMATION YOU SEEK, CUTE GREY ONE...
BUT FIRST YOU HAVE TO CATCH HER...
CEREBUS WILL CATCH YOU WENCH!...
HE'S WILLING TO BET HE'LL REGRET IT...
BUT CEREBUS WILL CATCH YOU...

AHA! A DOORWAY! NARROW AND CONCEALED ENOUGH THAT CEREBUS WOULD HAVE MISSED IT...
...HAD HE NOT SEEN THE WENCH ENTER...
TAP TAP
A STAIRWAY! DOUBTLESS THE WENCH IS COWERING IN THE DARKNESS.
TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP
KLANK
WELL...
CEREBUS KNEW HE WAS GOING TO REGRET IT...
ABRUPTLY, A SERIES OF TORCHES FLARE TO LIFE, REVEALING A MASSIVE FIGURE...
I AM K'COR... KING OF IMESH!...
SEDRA TELLS ME SHE SAW YOU TALKING TO ONE OF MY SLAVES...
CEREBUS WAS...
WELL? SPEAK UP-- YOU MUST HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY CHANGES...
YES. WHY DID YOU SEAL THE CITY LIKE...
NOT THE CITY, FOOL -- MY CITY! I OWN THE PEOPLE, THE BUILDINGS -- EVERYTHING! ALL WITHIN THESE WALLS ARE MY SLAVES...
WE NEED NO GATES! MY SLAVES HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD -- SO LONG AS THEY GET THEIR BUZZ THEY ARE CONTENT TO SERVE ME...
BUZZ?


THIS IS BUZ -- A COMPOUND OF MY OWN INVENTION
IT IS COMPOSED OF GRAIN, PROTEIN, THREE VITAMINS, STARCHES, SUGARS, AN OPIUM DERIVATIVE, AND ARTIFICIAL COLOURING...
IT IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT ADDICTIVE AND PROVIDES ALL THE FOOD VALUE NEEDED BY AN ADULT FOR ONE DAY...

EACH OF MY SLAVES WHO FILLS HIS QUOTA OF ROCKS GETS ONE EACH DAY -- THEY ARE, AS A RESULT, ETERNALLY STUPEFIED AND WELL FED...
NEEDLESS TO ADD, THEIR ADDICTION ALSO MAKES THEM DILIGENT WORKERS...

WHEN IMESH'S ECONOMY COLLAPSED I GAVE ONE TO EACH MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS TO GET THEM 'HOOKED' -- THEY GAVE ME THE CITY IN EXCHANGE FOR A YEAR'S SUPPLY...
NOW THAT THEIR SUPPLY HAS RUN OUT, THEY LABOUR WITH THE REST OF THE SLAVES!

MY POSITION IS SECURED BY THE FACT THAT SEDRA AND I ARE THE ONLY TWO WHO KNOW THE EXACT FORMULA FOR MAKING BUZ...
NOT THAT THERE IS ANY REAL DANGER -- MOST OF THE POPULACE HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE REMEMBERING WHAT DAY IT IS, TO BE CAPABLE OF ORGANIZING A REVOLUTION...

WHICH BRINGS US TO ANOTHER ISSUE AT HAND, BARBARIAN!

YOU SCALED THE WALL TO MY CITY, DISTURBED MY SLAVES, CHASED MY FEMALE...
...AND NOW, BY GILASH'S THIRD EYE, YOU'RE GOING TO TELL K'COR "WHY"!!

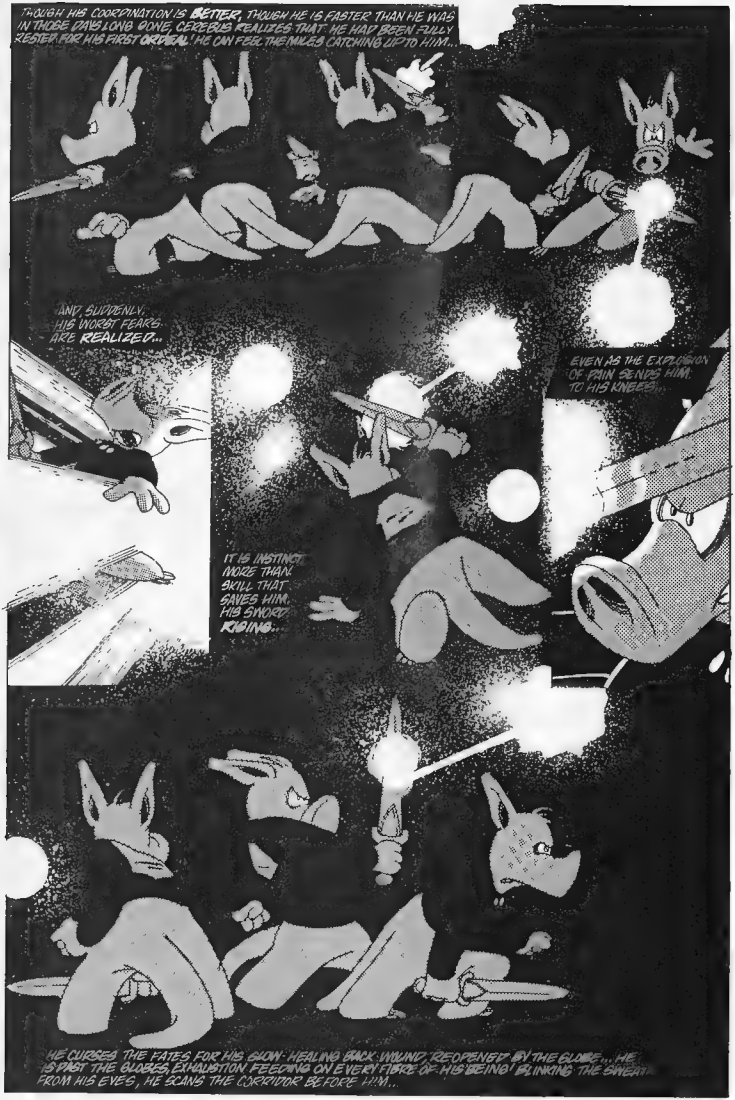
CEREBUS CAME TO IMEAN FOR ONLY ONE REASON AND THAT WAS TO...
NEVER MIND--I KNOW WHY YOU CAME! WE HAVE A BARBARIAN COME OVER THE WALL ABOUT TWICE A YEAR! THEY'RE USUALLY IGNORANT NORTHLANDERS IN SEARCH OF LOOT...
ONCE THEY SEE MY SLAVES, THEY CONVINCE THEMSELVES THAT THEY MUST HELP MY SLAVES TO REVOLT--"TEACH THEM TO DIE LIKE MEN"--WHATEVER THAT MEANS...
AYE! K'COR KNOWS YOU BARBARIANS TOO WELL-- WHEN MY SLAVES SHOW NO INTEREST IN REVOLTING, YOU DECIDE THAT YOU WILL AT LEAST TAKE SEDRA TO 'SAFETY' WITH YOU.
BUT, DEAR SEDRA IS NOT INTERESTED, WITLING! SHE CHERISHES HER PLACE AT MY SIDE, AND HAS NO INTEREST IN THE WIMS OF BARBARIANS...
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SEDRA?
YES, BELOVED.
FREEING MY SLAVES--IDIOCY! FREE THEM FOR WHAT? SO THEY CAN WANDER THE SNOWS AND STARVE TO DEATH? HERE THEY HAVE LIFE, WARMTH AND HAPPINESS!
CEREBUS CAME TO...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SAY! "THEY ARE IMEN AND MEN SHOULD BE FREE" A FREEMAN IS DANGEROUS TO HIMSELF AND EVERYONE ELSE, FREEDOM SHOULD BE LEFT TO THOSE WHO CAN PUT IT TO GOOD USE...
CEREBUS COULD DIE OF OLD AGE WAITING FOR PORKY THERE TO RUN OUT OF WIND!...

I USED MY FREEDOM TO GET POWER! AND THEN USED MY POWER TO GET MORE POWER...
STILL, AFTER THE CONVICTIONS, IT IS GOOD TO LISTEN TO SOMEONE CEREBUS CAN UNDERSTAND.
CEREBUS DOESN'T LIKE THIS DESPOT...
BUT CEREBUS AT LEAST UNDERSTANDS THIS DESPOT
YOU THINK I CARE NOTHING FOR MY SLAVES? DO YOU? MY PEOPLE ARE MY LIFE-- THEY SACRIFICED THEIR FREEDOM FOR A GREATER CAUSE...
AND THAT WOULD BE?
THE DEFENSE OF EARTH AGAINST THE SECRET INVASION OF VENUSIANS! EVEN NOW, THE SECOND PLANET FROM THE SUN IS MOUNTING IT'S FORCES.
THEY ARE COMING!... MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT!
MAYHAP CEREBUS IS TOO QUICK IN SAYING HE UNDERSTANDS THIS LUNATIC!
THE STRUCTURE WILL BE TWO HUNDRED FEET HIGH WHEN COMPLETED. IT'S THE SACRED SYMBOL OF THE VENUSIANS, SIGNALLING THE DEATH OF THEIR RACE.
ONE LOOK AT THIS WHEN THEY GET HERE SHOULD PUT A FEW KINKS IN THEIR PSEUDOPODS!
HAHAH HAHAHA HAAHAA HA AHA HAKAKA. KAK-AA COUGH COUGH
NOW DO YOU SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF MY MISSION, INSECT? IF YOU WERE TO FREE MY SLAVES, THE INVASION WOULD TAKE PLACE EXACTLY AS PLANNED...
AND WITH NONE TO RESIST THEM, THEY WOULD SOON HAVE ALL MEN OF EARTH LABOURING IN THE AMMONIA MINES OF VENUS...
WAIT! WAIT!

SO FAR AS CEREBUS IS CONCERNED? YOU CAN FAST: FRY THOSE SLAVES AND EAT THEM, CORPULENT ONE...
I AM KING OF THE NEW CONNIPTIN EMPIRE AND I HAD COME TO IMESH TO CONQUER IT...
AND PERSUADE YOUR MEN TO JOIN MY ARMY! HAVING SEEN YOUR MEN, CEREBUS HAS NO INTEREST DRAGGING THEM TO...
EH? WHAT'S THAT? A KING YOU SAY? OF COURSE -- OF COURSE! YOUR MEN? YOU ARE A KING WITHOUT SOLDIERS THEN?
CEREBUS LEFT THEM FORAGING FOR FOOD AND WATER OUTSIDE YOUR WALLS--
AS THERE SEEMS TO BE NO REASON FOR CEREBUS TO REMAIN HERE, HE WISHES TO...
CAME IN AHEAD OF THEM, EH? JUST TO BE SURE! HM! I LIKE THAT! A COURAGEOUS KING -- AS I AM A COURAGEOUS DEMI-GOD!
WE ARE ADMIRABLE FIGURES, YOU AND I!
SO, YOU HAVE COME TO TAKE MY CITY AND MY SLAVES FROM ME! VERY WELL -- I AM A FAIR KING -- YOU WILL HAVE YOUR CHANCE TO TAKE MY CITY AND MY SLAVES FOR YOUR OWN! I PROPOSE A WAGER OF KINGS! A KINGLY CHALLENGE FOR KINGLY STAKES...

IN A FEW MOMENTS, THOSE BARS BEFORE YOU WILL RISE! YOU WILL FOLLOW US INTO THE DOORWAY ON MY RIGHT! IF YOU CAN PASS THROUGH THE CORRIDOR UNSCATHED AND THEN DEFEAT MY CHAMPION, YOU WILL WIN MY CITY AND SLAVES! I WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE BUZ I HAVE AND SHOW YOU HOW TO MAKE IT.
WITH THAT SECRET YOU WILL CONTROL THEM -- AND IF YOU SO DESIRE...
...THEY WILL CONQUER THE WORLD IN YOUR NAME...
IF YOU ARE DEFEATED, YOUR MEN WILL BE WELCOMED TO A FEAST BY SEDRA! BY MORNING, MY POOL OF SLAVES WILL HAVE SOME NEW RESERVES...
GOOD LUCK.
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE TAKING AN EXTREME RISK WITH YOUR..., 'CRUSADE'...?
HAHAHAHAAA! WITH TARIM AND ANTI-VENUSIANS EVERYWHERE ON MY SIDE...
I CANNOT LOSE...
OF COURSE!
HOW STUPID OF CEREBUS TO FORGET...

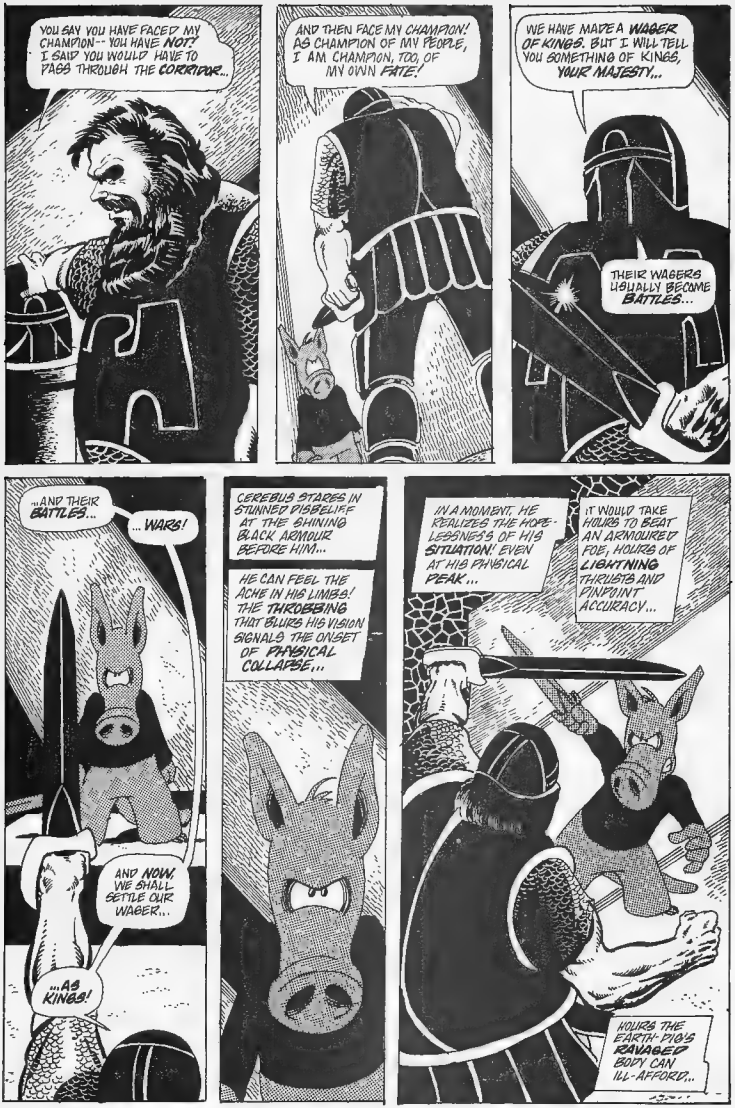
PLUNGING INTO THE BLACKNESS, CEREBUS ALREADY SUSPECTS THAT MANNER OF RECEPTION WOULD BE PREFERRED...
...AND IN THE NEXT INSTANT HE IS FLOWN RIGHT HOVERING IN THE BLACKNESS ARE THE FABLED ENERGY GLOBES OF MESH. ON A FOOLISH WAGER CEREBUS HAD FACED THEM IN HIS YOUTH... AT THAT TIME, HE HAD BEEN TRAINED BY THE AGING MAGICIAN WHO HAD CONJURED THEM...
"THE GLOBES FLARE BRIEFLY BEFORE STRIKING, YOUNG CEREBUS! WATCH THEM AND RESPOND QUICKLY! KEEP THE SWORD BETWEEN YOU AND THE GLOBES, AT ALL TIMES!"
"THE ENERGY IS ABSORBED BY METAL, AND IT TAKES THE GLOBES SEVERAL SECONDS TO RECHARGE! KEEP TRACK OF THEM AS BEST YOU CAN! THE GLOBES DO NOT THINK BUT YOU DO!"
"A CONTINUOUS CIRCLING MOTION IS THE BEST, COMBINE IT WITH SHORT STEPS FORWARD! REMEMBER YOU AREN'T SAFE UNTIL YOU ARE COMPLETELY PAST THEM AND YOU ARE LOST IF THEY MANAGE TO DRIVE YOU BACKWARDS!


THOUGH HIS COORDINATION IS BETTER, THOUGH HE IS FASTER THAN HE WAS IN THOSE DAYS LONG GONE, CEREBUS REALIZES THAT HE HAD BEEN FULLY RESTED FOR HIS FIRST ORDEAL. HE CAN FEEL THE MILES CATCHING UP TO HIM...
AND, SUDDENLY, HIS WORST FEARS ARE REALIZED...
EVEN AS THE EXPLOSION OF PAIN SENDS HIM TO HIS KNEES...
IT IS INSTINCT MORE THAN SKILL THAT SAVES HIM. HIS SWORD RISING...
HE CURSES THE FATES FOR HIS SLOW HEALING BACK WOUND, REOPENED BY THE GLOBE... HE IS PAST THE GLOBES, EXHAUSTION FEEDING ON EVERY FIBRE OF HIS BEING! BLINKING THE SWEAT FROM HIS EYES, HE SCANS THE CORRIDOR BEFORE HIM...

FOR SOMEWHERE UP AHEAD IS K'COR'S CHAMPION, EBBER TO FACE THE EARTH-PIG...
RIGHT NOW, CEREBUS WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO BEAT ELROD IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT...
I AM LORD KOGHEM!...
YOU ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED FOR ESCAPING THE GLOBES... BEFORE WE BEGIN, THERE ARE SOME RULES WE MUST...
A PANROVIAN! MAYHAP CEREBUS' LUCK IS CHANGING...
YOUR ACCENT IS NOT IMESHITE NOBLE SIR...
NAY! I AM PANROVIAN. THE RULES WE WILL...
OH! PANROVIAN, EH? IS IT TRUE THAT PANROVIANS DERIVE SEXUAL SATISFACTION FROM SMALL WOODLAND ANIMALS...?
WHAT?!
CEREBUS HAD HEARD THAT PANROVIAN MEN ARE BUILT SO SMALL THAT ANYTHING LARGER THAN A TITMOUSE IS QUITE BEYOND THEIR...uh... ABILITIES?
YOUR MAJESTY! I HAVE BEEN SENT TO LOCK SWORDS WITH YOU AND I WOULD HOPE....
I SAW KING KOREM IN A TAVERN ABOUT A FORTNIGHT GONE...
KING KOREM! TARIM BE PRAISED THAT HE YET...
HE OFFERED TO DRINK THE CONTENTS OF THE SPITTOON IF I BOUGHT HIM AN ALE...
CEREBUS THOUGHT THAT WAS A PRETTY GROSS WAY TO MAKE A LIVING...
EVEN FOR A DEGENERATE SOT LIKE KOREM
CEREBUS HEARD THE PANROVIAN "MARCH OF VIRGINS" HAD TO BE CANCELLED...

...YOUR DAUGHTER GOT PREGNANT...
...AND YOUR WIFE REFUSED TO MARCH ALONE...
YOU THINK PANROVY IS A JOKE... I... WILL ...SHOW... YOU... WHAT... PANROVIANS...
CAN DO!
ACTUALLY, CEREBUS LIKES PANROVIANS
PANROVIANS WILL BE TRUSTED TO DIG LATRINES FOR THE NEW CONNIPTIN EMPIRE
YOU'RE... EVIL!!!
PANROVY WILL NEVER BOW TO A TYRANT!...
BUT CEREBUS WISHES TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMS...
STOP! STOP!
IS IT TRUE THAT PANROVIANS HAVE A LOT OF CHILDREN...
...BECAUSE THEY FIGURE THERE'S ANOTHER FAMINE COMING?
NYAHHH

STAND RIGHT THERE, OKAY?
DON'T MOVE.
JUST FOR ANOTHER SECOND!
THAT'S IT!
AND NOW, YOU WORTHLESS GREY TYRANT...
I'M-GOING-TO-
AGLK
SO NOW CEREBUS HAS A CITY FULL OF DRUG ADDICTS AND AN ARMY FULL OF CHEERLEADERS TO LEAD ON WEST....
IF OUR ENEMIES DON'T LAUGH THEMSELVES SICK, WE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE...
ALL RIGHT, K'COR, CEREBUS HAS ESCAPED YOUR GLOBES AND KILLED YOUR CHAMPION...
NOW YOU CAN GIVE ME THE FORMULA FOR BUZ AND CEREBUS WILL...
ONE MOMENT, YOUR MAJESTY...


YOU SAY YOU HAVE FACED MY CHAMPION -- YOU HAVE NOT! I SAID YOU WOULD HAVE TO PASS THROUGH THE CORRIDOR...
AND THEN FACE MY CHAMPION! AS CHAMPION OF MY PEOPLE, I AM CHAMPION, TOO, OF MY OWN FATE!
WE HAVE MADE A WAGER OF KINGS. BUT I WILL TELL YOU SOMETHING OF KINGS, YOUR MAJESTY...
THEIR WAGERS USUALLY BECOME BATTLES...
"...AND THEIR BATTLES...
...WARS!
AND NOW WE SHALL SETTLE OUR WAGER...
...AS KINGS!
CEREBUS STARES IN STUNNED DISBELIEF AT THE SHINING BLACK ARMOUR BEFORE HIM...
HE CAN FEEL THE ACHE IN HIS LIMBS! THE THROBBING THAT BLURS HIS VISION SIGNALS THE ONSET OF PHYSICAL COLLAPSE...
IN A MOMENT, HE REALIZES THE HOPELESSNESS OF HIS SITUATION! EVEN AT HIS PHYSICAL PEAK...
IT WOULD TAKE HOURS TO BEAT AN ARMOURED FOE, HOURS OF LIGHTNING THRUSTS AND PINPOINT ACCURACY...
HOURS THE EARTH PIG'S RAVAGED BODY CAN ILL-AFFORD!...

THE SLASHING EDGE OF THE BLACK SWORD RISES AGAIN AND AGAIN IN THE EARTH PIG'S LINE OF SIGHT...
EACH MOVE IS CALCULATED, POWERFUL! "THIS BUBBLEGOOS KING", THINKS THE AARDVARK, "IS NO MEAN, SWORDSMAN."
FACING ALMOST CERTAIN DEATH, THE AARDVARK'S BLOWS BEGIN TO GROW LESS ACCURATE...
HE HAD BEEN WITHOUT SLEEP SINCE RISING THE TWO MORNINGS BEFORE AND FRUSTRATION AND DESPAIR EAT AWAY AT HIS SPIRIT...
HE HAD SEEN MEN FALTER BEFORE HIM, RECOGNIZING THEIR IMMINENT DEFEAT...
THEY HAD RECOGNIZED A HOPELESS SITUATION AS HE DID NOW...
THERE IS A WRIST-TWISTING MOTION THAT CEREBUS MISSES AND THE FLAT OF THE SWORD IMPACTS SHARPLY WITH THE SIDE OF THE AARDVARK'S HEAD..
REELING BACKWARD, CEREBUS MANAGES TO RAISE HIS SWORD TO BLOCK A FATAL BLOW! IN REGAINING HIS BALANCE, HOWEVER ...
... HE IS UNABLE TO BLOCK THE RETURN STROKE WHICH RAKES HIS LEFT SIDE, FRACTURING ONE OF THE EARTH-PIG'S RIBS...
HE THINKS OF HIS OPPONENT, SWEATING AND PUFFING IN HIS ARMOUR, HIS FLESH UNMARKED..
AND AN IMMENSE RAGE BOILS UP INSIDE OF CEREBUS.

HE SWINGS WILDLY, FEELS THE SWORD CATCH, BRIEFLY, THEN RIP... THERE IS A BLUR OF BLACK, RED AND GREY...
...AND SUDDENLY, K'COR HOLDS THE GREAT BLACK SWORD IN HIS RIGHT HAND...!
A SLOW GRIN CROSSES THE EARTH-PIG'S FACE AND HE SALUTES THE GESTURE -- CEREBUS HADN'T DEMANDED HIS OWN ARMOUR...
...K'COR WILL NOT DEMAND COMPENSATION FOR THE WOUND ON HIS HAND..
NOT THAT ANY WOULD BE GIVEN...
CEREBUS SEES THE KING IS PLAGUED BY DOUBT -- WONDERING IF CEREBUS COMES TO DO BATTLE -- OR MERELY TO WOUND HIS GOOD ARM...
CEREBUS QUICKLY DECIDES TO LEAVE THE ARM ALONE! THE KING DOESN'T KNOW THAT, HOWEVER AND THE EARTH-PIG ADVANCES...
...SMILING.
IN A WHILE K'COR WOULD REDUCE THE AARDVARK'S INTENTIONS BUT FOR NOW, CEREBUS RELISHES THE SIGHT OF THE KING MINCING FAINTLY BACKWARDS, SWORD RAISED TO DEFEND HIS ARM...
FEIGNING OUTRAGE AND ANNOYANCE AT THIS DEVIOUS COWARDICE...
CEREBUS DELIVERS A BONE-RATTLING BLOW TO THE BLACK-ARMOURED BELLY...
FIGHT, YOU CORPULENT CRAVEN...!
CEREBUS HAS CITIES TO CONQUER!

HE WOULD CARRY THE CONNIPTING ON HIS BACK IF NEED BE! THE WORLD HAD NEVER SEEN AN ARMY OF FAT, BRUTAL WARRIORS IN FANCY ARMOUR! A NEW EMPIRE WAS DAWNING...
K'COR CONTINUES HIS SLOW RETREAT AS CEREBUS POUNDS AT HIS BELLY...
THE NEW CONNIPTIN EMPIRE WOULD BE FUELED BY CHEERLEADERS AND TOY ACTORS -- FROST-TESTED MARINES AND ALL THE OTHERS WHO HAD SOME TOO WELL TO INSANE DESPOTS...
CEREBUS WAITS FOR K'COR TO TURN AND FIGHT -- IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...
A NEW AGE WAS DAWNING WHEN MEN WOULD ONCE MORE BE MEASURED BY THEIR SWORDS -- A NEW GOLDEN AGE OF WARRIORS!
AND CEREBUS WOULD LEAD THOSE WARRIORS ON GREAT AND GLORIOUS CRUSADES! HIS MEN WOULD BE ENGAGED IN THE NOBLEST OF ALL POSSIBLE PURSUITS...
STUNG BY THE LAST BLOW, K'COR RETREATS SEVERAL STEPS AND THEN PAUSES...
...ENDLESS PILLAGING, DRINKING AND FIGHTING IN THE NAME OF CEREBUS THE KING...

K'COR PAUSES, SEEMING TO CONTEMPLATE HIS NEXT MOVE. A MOMENT... AFTER HIS SWORD TIPS BACK WITH RESIGNATION
AND IN EVIDENT DISGUST, HE FLINGS HIS SWORD AT A WALL BEHIND HIM...
YOU CEDE CERBERUS THE VICTORY, THEN?
GET OUT.
WHAT MANNER OF JEST...?
I POISONED ALL THE WELLS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA A YEAR AGO TO KEEP BARBARIANS FROM STRAYING TOO CLOSE TO IMESH...
IF YOU DID LEAVE YOUR MEN LOOKING FOR FOOD AND WATER...
THEY ARE ALL QUITE DEAD NOW...
WHICH MEANS YOU ARE NO LONGER OF INTEREST TO ME..
NOW, GO!
THE WARDER OF KINGS WAS OVER AS CERBERUS WATCHED THE RETREATING FIGURE OF K'COR..
HE WAS A KING NO LONGER. WOUNDED, TIRED, HUNGRY
STRANDED WITHOUT FOOD, MONEY OR SHELTER IN A BARREN AND ALIEN LAND..
THE EARTH-PIG'S RAGE AND FRUSTRATION ERUPTS IN A PROTRACTED, PIERCING CRY..
ECHOING AND RE-ECHOING IN UPON ITSELF -- STABBING OUT INTO THE CITY WHERE POWDERY SNOW SWIRLS BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS..
BUT THE IMESHITES, ENGROSSED IN THEIR DAILY CHORES, HEAR NOTHING..

CEREBUS
bi-weekly
March 24, 1989

Map of the Aardvarkian Age

The map of Cerebus' world was designed by Michael Loubert (Deni's brother) who created all the place names as well. It appeared in Cerebus No. 3 through No. 10.

DESIGNED BY MICHAEL LOUBERT

This is the original letters page to Cerebus No. 9

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

THE STARVING
ARTIST.
©1989 FURTADO
A SINGLE PAGE.
ONE PAGE! ONE LOUSY PAGE! I CAN DO THIS!
THIS IS IT! THE BIG BREAK! FAME, FORTUNE, WOMEN!, I CAN DO THIS! YES! I CAN DO....
CRUMBLE!
CRUMBLE!
RiiiP!
A SINGLE PAGE.

cerebus
bi-weekly
March 24, 1989

INSIDE BACK COVER
of
Cerebus No. 9

This advertisement appeared as the Inside Back Cover of Cerebus No. 9

PHIL SEULING'S

1979
COMIC ART CONVENTION

Sat., June 30, 12 noon - 8:00 p.m.
Sun., July 1, 10 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

New York City
Statler-Hilton Hotel
Seventh Avenue & 33rd Street

Adults $3.00
12 & under $1.50

It's time again for the biggest and best comics convention of them all! For the twelfth year in a row, the Comic Art Convention invites all comic book collectors and fans to their own kind of show -- a dazzling assortment of events, entertainments, guests, and displays!

This year, we return to the Statler-Hilton Hotel, where the Comic Art Convention was located for its first **five** years. Long-time convention fans will renew acquaintance and conjure up early memories of their convention experiences. Newer collectors and first-time attendees will enjoy the setting a grand (and freshly redecorated) hotel provides.

Both Saturday and Sunday will be full-rich days. A tight schedule of attractions will keep things lively, and you'll have to make an effort to see the art displays, hear the guests, watch the slide shows, shop for your most-wanted comic books, attend the autograph sessions, applaud the costume parade, meet new friends (who have the same mania you do), get to the next panel on time, and perhaps even find time for a quick lunch!

You can learn more than you ever expected from the forthright talks given by famous writers and artists, almost always with question-and-answer periods afterward, so that you can participate. When you find out how the artists, writers, and editors really feel about working with each other, you'll know you're among familiar friends who are willing to share some experiences.

If you come to buy, you'll find dealers from all over the country gathered into an exotic bazaar of delectable collectibles -- not only comic books old and new, but fine artists' original drawings, big little books, comic character toys and games, posters, fanzines, new products, movie and science fiction mementos, bubble gum cards from Superman to Galactica, photos, autographs - more than you can imagine [or afford!]

But you can feel rich just by being there! The priceless prizes that all collectors lust for are right in front of your fascinated eyes. The art you love, whether paintings or black and white line work are theirs for your inspection. The newest publications, almost wet with fresh printers ink, are being offered by their publishers, often with the artists present to add their autographs.

Also: Films on Saturday night when the rest of the show closes down.

Also: An auction each day, of some superb offerings [and some cheesy cheapies, too!]

Also: Contests, events, and more!

Make this year your best as a comics fan. Come to the Twelfth Annual Comic Art Convention in New York City! You'll be delighted you did!

Please send for further info and Hotel rates to

PHIL SEULING'S

COMIC ART CONVENTION IN PHILADELPHIA

Sat., July 14, 12 noon - 8:00 p.m.
Sun., July 15, 10 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Adults $3.00
12 & under $1.50

The comic book collector's favorite convention invades all fans to come to their own kind of event - the best show of its kind in the country! The Sheraton Hotel will be the scene as it has been before and the crowds will be here on July 14 and 15. Saturday and Sunday, two days of a comics fans fantasy!

In the Beginning:

Three years ago, a peculiar set of circumstances caused the Comic Art Convention which had run for nine years in New York City, to look toward Philadelphia for a temporary home. That first Philadelphia experience was such a grand and glorious time that it demanded a repeat performance last year. Now we have a third and even better time planned for July of this year, in what has become a terrific and delightful annual arrangement - the Comic Art Convention in Philadelphia!

Attractions:

Although it is still too early to announce specific details, we can guarantee some of the best times you'll have this summer! Whether you want an autograph from an admired artist, or you like bidding on rare comics material at one of the daily auctions, or you are excited by seeing up close the artwork you loved in comic books or on magazine covers, or you want to expand your comic art knowledge at the panels, talks, slide show lectures, or interviews - **whatever** you like best, a full schedule will offer you a feast!

The best part of all will of course be you, the fans, and the excitement you bring with you. Remember, this is the year you promised to enter the wonderful Costume Parade (cash prizes!) and not just come to watch. Let's participate, gang, and there will be a souvenir gift to **everyone** who enters in costume! (No civilian disguises, wise guy!)

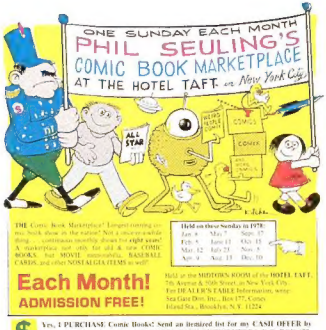
A Blast from the Past:

Those everloving purveyors of rare and beautiful old comic books - the dealers! - will be here from all quarters, ready to exchange their precious material for a mere handful of your gold. You can buy a bargain or go sky high for that incredibly scarce issue you've always imagined owning. And who can put a price on a dream!

Just bring in the same immense room with millions of these treasures will be worth your time at the Conventions. Look at 1940's comic books, artists drawings, old comic books, character toys, new or recent comics, games, mementos, premiums, gum cards, science fiction books, movie posters, and try to imagine such a collection of historic and valued material anywhere else! This is the place to be.

PLEASE SEND FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND HOTEL RATES TO

the original back cover to cerebus number nine



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